THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF TH'
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(484)

American Embassy,
Guatemala City, Guatemala,
November 10, 1953.

OFFICIAL - INFORMAL

UNCLASSIFIED TOP SECRET

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 9/5/72
PER MCNeil OFFICE ARA
FADRC FOI CASE NO. 74C506 Schlesinger

714.00/11-1053
State Department Mail Ec Returned to
Central
Files

Dear Ray:

For your information I enclose two memoranda reflecting the thoughts of some of the individuals connected with the movement to overthrow the Arbenz Government in Guatemala. They make interesting reading in conjunction with John Fisher's conversation of October 8 with Colonel Barrios Peña and Arch Randolph's talk with Colonel Castillo Armas reported in Tegucigalpa's despatch No. 181 of November 5.

The first memorandum reports a conversation which Ambassador Peurifoy and I had with the Nicaraguan Ambassador, Sr. Aurelio Montenegro, in which he indicated that Colonel Guillermo Flores Avendaño, then a refugee in his Embassy, anticipated that the anti-Government forces would be able to unite in the near future. Sr. Montenegro said that such unity was a prerequisite for any assistance from President Somoza.

The second memorandum is based on information received from a source known to have good contacts with the anti-Government group. While generally unreliable on other matters, he is believed to be reasonably accurate on this subject. In a previous memo, this informant had told Mr. Hill that Colonel Barrios Peña was

Raymond G. Leddy, Esquire,
Officer in Charge,
Central America and Panama Affairs,
Room 4103, New State,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CRS/IR
BY [signature] DATE 7/9/82
REQUEST FOR DECLASSIFICATION DATE
EXEMPTION (b)(1) (b)(3)
DECLASSIFY IN PART
IMPOSSIBLE TO DECLASSIFY
PA or FOI [illegible]

306789

US DECLASSIFIED TOP SECRET

in touch with General Trujillo and hoped to receive substantial aid from him. The current memo indicates that Trujillo has lost interest in the movement, at least until a unified group can be formed in Guatemala.

Adding all the information together, I attempted to conclude that Somoza and Trujillo, either independently or in collusion, have decided that there is no point in aiding the Guatemalan exiles unless they can get together. Despite Colonel Flores' optimism, I do not believe that such unification has yet taken place and I have little confidence that these widely differing groups will be able to get together although pressure from Somoza and Trujillo will undoubtedly help. Further, insofar as Colonel Flores is well informed regarding the status of the movement within Guatemala, there appears to be little internal support of an organized character and the opposition leaders are apparently flirting with some very dubious characters in their effort to acquire adherents. I am inclined to agree with Colonel Castillo Armas' analysis that the Armed Forces in Guatemala are generally loyal to Arbenz.

In other words, the prospects do not appear very bright and it seems that organizational work and perhaps some fundamental changes in the situation will have to occur before a revolt would have much chance of succeeding.

Sincerely,

Bill

William L. Krieg

Enclosures:

Two memoranda dated November 3 and November 6, 1953 (Top Secret - Security Information)

C O P Y

UNCLASSIFIED
SECURITY INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM

November 3, 1953

Subject: TRUJILLO Drops Interest in Subsidizing Guatemalan Insurrectionist Group

The person mentioned in my previous memorandum on conversations between President Trujillo and certain Guatemalan figures about an insurrection told me today that Trujillo had dropped his interest in the project. He said that Col. SAVALLOS and Lic. Ramiro FLORES had gone to the United States, but had received no further encouragement (presumably from Trujillo's representatives) and did not proceed to the Dominican Republic as originally planned.

Meanwhile, Colonel Roberto BARRIOS Peña (not Jorge Barrios Solares) and Sr. ARCE Valladares had been in contact with Trujillo and had been rebuffed. Trujillo said he had no faith in exiles and he would not be interested until a unified group was formed within Guatemala.

My informant said he was discouraged at the possibility of doing anything within Guatemala. Every time something started there were twenty people who wanted to be President after the uprising and none would cooperate with the other nineteen. There was always danger that such personal ambitions would lead to disclosure of the plot to the authorities. He said he had concluded that the only means of overthrowing the Government was through a decision of the United States Government to do so. The U.S. need not do it itself, but could work through friendly Central American and Caribbean Governments.

John Calvin Hill, Jr.

UNCLASSIFIED
SECURITY INFORMATION

C O P Y

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~
UNCLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

November 6, 1953

Participants: Sr. Aurelio MONTENEGRO,
Nicaraguan Ambassador in Guatemala

Mr. John E. Peurifoy, U.S. Ambassador

Mr. William L. Krieg, Counselor of Embassy

Subject: Efforts to Overthrow the Guatemalan Government

In the course of Ambassador Peurifoy's initial call on St. Aurelio MONTENEGRO, the Nicaraguan Ambassador, the latter stated that he was leaving for Managua the following day (November 7) to be present when President Somoza returned from his South American trip and would take the occasion to report to him orally about the situation in Guatemala. He added that Col. Guillermo FLORES Avendaño, who had taken asylum in the Nicaraguan Embassy, would leave Guatemala on the same plane. (Col. Flores was one of the anti-Communists arrested in connection with the Salamá uprising last March. Provisionally released from prison on bail in September, he sought asylum in the Nicaraguan Embassy after his bail was cancelled and he was ordered to return to the Salamá jail.)

Sr Montenegro remarked that the safeconduct for Col. Flores' departure had come a few days before but that Col. Flores was reluctant to leave alone and had voluntarily postponed his departure to coincide with that of Sr. Montenegro. The Nicaraguan Ambassador explained this reluctance by saying that Col. Flores had been an important figure in the underground opposition to the Arbenz regime and feared the Government might attempt to prevent his departure. He added that Col. Flores had received word from his fellow-conspirators in El Salvador that they desired him to join them because developments were proceeding rapidly.

By way of background Sr. Montenegro explained that the anti-Arbenz conspirators had approached President Somoza for assistance and that he had offered them anything they needed, but only on the condition that the various opposition elements unite. Somoza had added that in its present divided condition, the opposition was doomed to failure. The Nicaraguan Ambassador then went on to say that Col. Flores had received word that the various opposition leaders--Gen. Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, Col. Roberto Barrios Peña and Col. Carlos Castillo Armas--were on the point of settling their differences and agreeing on a plan for joint action, and hence it was important for Col. Flores to join them.

In response to an inquiry, Sr. Montenegro said that Col. Flores believed that two high-ranking Army officers on active duty would support the revolutionary movement and that Sr. Jorge TORIELLO was also behind it; Col. Carlos ALDANA Sandoval was interested, but not much reliance was placed on him. Mr. Krieg expressed some surprise that Jorge Toriello was in on the movement in view of his overweaning ambition and his general reputation for unreliability. Sr. Montenegro smiled and shrugged and said he agreed but that that was what Col. Flores had told him.

As a postscript Sr. Montenegro said that Col. Flores and most of the responsible anti-Communist leaders were opposed to the Salamá revolt but that "some young hot-heads," particularly Carlos SIMONS, had precipitated matters prematurely. He said Col. Flores was determined nothing like this should happen again.